

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 419

By Herron

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Chancellor Aaron Brown, Sr. of Henry County.

WHEREAS, it was with great sadness and a profound sense of loss that we learned of the passing of the Honorable Aaron Clifton Brown, Sr., one of Henry County's most prominent citizens in this century and an accomplished public servant and friend to so many Tennesseans, a man who had served his state in a selfless manner which present and future generations would do well to emulate; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Brown had served with acumen and alacrity in all three branches of state and local government; and

WHEREAS, it is only fitting that the General Assembly and the State of Tennessee recall with fondness and admiration the life of the man who held many offices and titles, but whose favorite perhaps was that of "Chancellor"; and

WHEREAS, Aaron Brown was born October 16, 1911, the son of Minnie Cothan Brown and Ed Brown, who ably served Henry County as a member of the state House of Representatives during the 76th General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, after moving to Paris in 1925, he attended Grove High School, where he played football, and also Columbia Military Academy; and

WHEREAS, in 1936, he earned his law degree at Cumberland Law School in Lebanon, Tennessee, was licensed to practice law, and established his law practice in Paris; and

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WHEREAS, Mr. Brown proudly served his country as a member of the U.S. Navy during World War II; and

WHEREAS, after the war, Mr. Brown returned to Paris, where he resumed his law practice until 1948 when he was appointed Clerk and Master of the Chancery Court, in which position he turned in his usual adroit performance; and

WHEREAS, he was attorney for the City of Paris when it joined the Tennessee Valley Authority; and

WHEREAS, in 1954, he was elected City Commissioner; in 1955, he began a productive tenure as Mayor of Paris, and completed this meritorious service in 1959; and

WHEREAS, in 1965, Mr. Brown was elected to serve as Henry County's delegate to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention, where the delegates from all across Tennessee in turn elected him as their President of that Convention, a position in which he served with distinction; and

WHEREAS, in 1966, he was elected to represent the 24th Senatorial District of Carroll, Henry, Lake, Obion, and Weakley counties, and his constituents were well served by Senator Brown's devotion to honest government and his insistence upon fairness and equity for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, during his service in the General Assembly, Senator Brown was an eloquent advocate of the one man-one vote principle that resulted in representation in local government being based on number of people rather than geography; he was also chief sponsor of the then-controversial legislation which placed Tennessee on daylight-savings time; and

WHEREAS, unflinching in his pursuit of the truth and unafraid of what he might find there, he also worked to repeal Tennessee's so-called Monkey Law, which prohibited the teaching of the theory of evolution; and

WHEREAS, his heart always was tender for those for whom life had been difficult; he astutely guided to passage legislation raising Workmen's Compensation medical payments; and

WHEREAS, upon the death of Chancellor Wayne Cox, Senator Brown was appointed by then-Governor Buford Ellington as Chancellor of the Eighth Chancery Division; and

WHEREAS, he was elected twice as Chancellor, serving the counties of Benton, Carroll, Decatur, Henry, and Henderson with passionate commitment to make this historic Court of Equity nothing less than exactly that, a court in which equity was done for every man, woman and child, no matter what their circumstances or station in life; and

WHEREAS, even after he retired, he relished the opportunity to serve his fellow citizens and justice as a special judge; and

WHEREAS, this exceptional jurist was truly an old-fashioned lawyer in the most positive sense, as he greatly enjoyed the human aspects of the law; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Brown served as the leader of virtually every organization he ever joined, including not only the Tennessee Constitutional Convention of 1965, but also organizations ranging from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion to the Lions Club and the Young Democrats; and

WHEREAS, a lawyer's lawyer, he was a member of the Henry County, Tennessee, and American Bar Associations, as well as the American Judicature Society and the American Trial Lawyers Association; and

WHEREAS, Chancellor Brown was truly a judge's judge; his fellow jurists from across Tennessee awarded him their highest honor, when in 1975 they installed him as president of the Tennessee Judicial Conference; and

WHEREAS, he set such an example by his life, both as an attorney and a jurist, that both of his law partners, his son Aaron, Jr. and his friend Julian Guinn, also became judges; and

WHEREAS, he was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Paris, where for many years he served as a Sunday school teacher for the men's Bible class, as a steward, and as a trustee; and

WHEREAS, he was blessed to be married for almost forty years to the former Viria Bell of Camden, until her passing in 1978; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by two fine sons, the Honorable Aaron C. Brown, Jr. of Paris and Gerald Brown of Nashville; a brother, Charles Brown of Mississippi; and a granddaughter, Molly K. Brown of Oregon; and

WHEREAS, an extraordinary gentleman who astutely served his fellow citizens in so many ways, Aaron Brown, Sr. truly lived the examined life with the courage of his strong convictions, the joy of serving others, and a passion for justice and fairness that sets an example for all of us who now miss him; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby honor the memory of Aaron Clifton Brown, Sr., reflecting thankfully on his indelible legacy of amazing public service as an attorney, clerk and master, city commissioner, mayor, delegate to and president of the Constitutional Convention, senator and, above all, chancellor.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we express our sympathy and condolences to his family and to his many, many friends.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final resolving clause omitted from such copy.